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DOH-CITRUS LAUNCHES INCENTIVE-BASED PROGRAM TO HELP PREGNANT WOMEN QUIT SMOKING

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The Florida Department of Health in Citrus County (DOH-Citrus) is now certified to offer the BABY & ME – Tobacco Free Program™, an evidence-based smoking cessation program designed to help pregnant women quit smoking for good.

The program provides free counseling support, resources and incentives to pregnant mothers (no later than 36 weeks) who are current smokers, or who have quit within three months of becoming pregnant.

Upon successfully quitting and staying smoke free, enrolled participants are eligible for free diaper vouchers during the prenatal period and up to 12 months following the birth of their baby. A smoker who lives with an enrolled, pregnant woman can also join the program and if successfully quits, may receive diaper vouchers as well.

Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of health issues for developing babies, including preterm birth, low birth weight and birth defects. Smoking during and after pregnancy also increases the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Citrus County has one of the highest rates in the state of live births to mothers who smoked during pregnancy. From 2016-18, 20.3 percent of babies were born to mothers who smoked during pregnancy, a rate that is more than four times higher than the state rate of 4.8 percent (2016-18), according to [FLHealthCHARTS](#).

DOH-Citrus Community Health Program Administrator Carmen Hernandez is one of four staff members certified to implement and enroll women into the program. “This program will help us tackle the high number of infants exposed to tobacco by giving pregnant mothers who want to quit, but are under a lot of stress financially, emotionally and physically, that extra motivation and support,” said Hernandez. “Our goal is to enroll as many as we can; to help mothers make that important decision and keep that commitment for themselves and their babies.”

To enroll in the program, pregnant mothers should contact their health care provider or email Carmen Hernandez at Carmen.Hernandez@FLHealth.gov or call 352-513-6072.

For more information about DOH-Citrus, go to www.CitrusCountyHealth.org or follow us on Twitter at [@FLHealthCitrus](https://twitter.com/FLHealthCitrus).

About the BABY & ME – Tobacco Free Program™

The BABY & ME – Tobacco Free Program™ at the Florida Department of Health in Citrus County is funded by Tobacco Free Florida. The BABY & ME – Tobacco Free Program is in 21 states nationwide. For more information, go to www.babyandmetobaccofree.org.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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